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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the portrayal of blacks, Asians, and native Americans in Fourth of July political cartoons from the 1870's to the 1970's in five American newspapers--the New York Times, Chicago Tribune, Atlanta Constitution, Washington Post, and the Columbus Dispatch. Images of these racial and ethnic groups were compared with images of women over the same period. Specific purposes were to determine the frequency of images of racial minorities and caucasians and to identify various aspects of minorities images such as dominance, appearance, and role. Of a total of 577 political cartoons, 378 had specific July Fourth themes. Of these, 354 portrayed women and 24 portrayed racial minorities. Fourth of July cartoons were selected for study because they are one of the few cultural artifacts that have been around for 100 years and because they often reflected the "U.S. as melting pot" rhetoric which might be expected to portray American cultural realities at different time periods. Findings indicated that, in general, cartoons excluded racial minorities except during specific time periods when a particular group was often discussed in the news (for example, the case of the blacks during the 1960's as a result of civil rights activism). When minority groups were represented, however, the depiction of all subjects changed from near caricature in early decades to greater directness and simplicity in later years. In spite of this progress, however, few racial minorities were shown in roles challenging the establishment. Also, minorities were seldom portrayed as equal to Caucasians. Of the groups studied, native Americans were pictured as least assimilated and women and blacks as most assimilated. (DB)

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National Self-Consciousness and Minority Images

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A great deal of research has centered on the assimilation of minority groups into the repertoire of imagery used by the media. Portrayal of blacks, in particular, has been examined in magazine and newspaper ads, television commercials, and network programs. Occasionally Asians, native Americans, and other groups are included too. Also, images of blacks and women have been compared.[1] Some research has considered changes in minority images over time.[2] Most studies do not consider change over a long time period, and most do not examine newspaper political cartoons, which are a reflection of editorial policy.

In this study, we looked at the portrayal of blacks, Asians, and native Americans in Fourth of July political cartoons in American newspapers for about one hundred years. We compared images of these groups with images of women in order to examine assimilation of various minorities into cartoon imagery. Several considerations suggested cartoons as a good source of data. Cartoons are the oldest form of visual imagery carried in U.S. media. We were interested in long-term change and sought cultural artifacts which had been around for at least 100 years. Also, we were interested in the assimilation of various racial groups and women into visual imagery. Since a favorite verbal image in Fourth of July rhetoric is the "U.S. as melting pot" and since cartoons reflect cultural and social trends,[3] we expected Fourth of July cartoons to indicate the degree to which the "melting pot" actually describes an American cultural reality.

Research centered on the images of blacks, Asians, and native Americans. Women were used as a comparison group. Frequencies of racial minorities and Caucasians were considered; incidence of racial groups and females was

contrasted so that we could see how American minorities fared beside a consistently under-represented gender; and the number of racial minorities shown in various historical periods was examined. O'Kelly and Blomquist[4] compared their findings to a brief review of the literature on blacks in media from 1953 to 1973. They found an increase of blacks in magazine and television commercials, but not in newspaper ads. Studying a longer period of time, we expected an increase in blacks and other minorities over 100 years reflecting gradual assimilation into the repertoire of visual images. We also expected to find more racial minorities when they or their causes were salient. For example, Asians should appear during World War II, the Korean War, and around the time of their mass immigration. Blacks and native Americans and women enunciated their grievances during the 1960s and 1970s, and could be expected more frequently then.

This study also focused on several aspects of minorities' images which were of interest to other researchers doing content analysis: dominance, appearance, and role. Dominick and Greenberg[5] analyzed the relative dominance of blacks in television ads during the late 1960s. Blacks rarely appeared alone or with other blacks but rather in sizeable crowds with whites. They seldom spoke or held a product. Most often, blacks were in public service announcements, but even there, others were the announcers. In 1973, Greenberg and Mazingo[6] noted that blacks appeared increasingly as background and walk-ons in television ads. When blacks were shown, commercials typically had more than six people. In 1976, O'Kelly and Blomquist[7] considered both television commercials and magazine ads. Out of 368 commercials on TV, only four had more than one black. In magazines, blacks were part of a crowd. Here, Asians and native Americans as well as blacks were considered. Dominance was assessed by considering

whether members of minority groups were shown alone or as equal or subordinate in their size, spatial and numerical placement, and verbalization.

Roles of minorities, especially blacks, have been analyzed, mostly in magazine ads. In 1953, Shuey, King, and Griffith[8] found that 80 of the blacks in ads from seven major magazines were cooks, maids, and servants for whites. Replicating that study in 1968, Cox[9] reported more varied roles for blacks; 55% were in entertainment, sports, professional, business, student or clerical roles. Colfax and Steinberg[10] repeated the Cox study in 1970 and concluded blacks filled minor, token, or derogatory roles in magazine ads. By 1976, O'Kelly and Blomquist[11] reported little change in black roles. When blacks appeared (less than 7% of the ads), they represented an institution rather than a product. Here we examined the roles of minorities to see if they were stereotypical. Examples would be blacks eating watermelon or exhibiting "step and fetch it" behavior; native Americans, hiding behind trees or crawling around with tomahawks; and Asians, performing trickery or executing cruel deeds. Roles also were analyzed to see if they represented something other than themselves, e.g., a nation, liberty, independence. We expected minority roles to become less stereotypical and more varied over time as assimilation into American life grew. We also remained alert to evidence of increasing integration of minorities into the pool of figures used to represent abstract or general ideas. Finally, we looked for instances when minorities were shown in roles which challenged the establishment.

Appearance is another feature of minority imagery, which merits research attention, although it has received little. O'Kelly and Blomquist[12] paid some attention to black attire; yet most research emphasized how often

minorities appeared in newspaper ads, on television programs, on television commercials, or in magazine ads[13] rather than how their physical appearance was portrayed. In this study, appearance referred to facial features (exaggerated racial characteristics, such as large lips) and dress (attractive in the style of the day, ethnic costume, uniform, impoverished). Over time we expected less exaggerated facial features and less ethnic attire for racial minorities, and less exaggeration of hair and figure and less costume-like clothing for women.

Methodology

Content analysis was performed on political cartoons which appeared in July Fourth editions of five newspapers during the whole period when newspapers carried such cartoons - i.e., 1870-1976. The newspapers were: the New York Times (83 cartoons), Chicago Tribune (219 cartoons), Atlanta Constitution (93 cartoons), Washington Post (89) and the Columbus Dispatch (95). These newspapers were chosen because of regional spread, political orientation, and accessibility. They also reflected both conservative and liberal editorial policies. No western paper was published long enough under one name to be included in the study.

A saturation sample of cartoons from the five newspapers insured that all political cartoons were included. The total number was 577. Coding sheets, developed in a pilot study, were used to obtain demographic information on people in the cartoons. Four coders drew data from microfilm copies of newspapers. Inter-recorder reliability was calculated by having a different coder independently code one-tenth of all cartoons. The percentage of agreement on all items coded was 99.3 percent on the average. While the nature of checklists facilitated high reliability, spot checks

satisfied us with the amount of substantive agreement. Data from these checklists were used to examine frequencies of minority imagery over time. We divided the historical periods into decades since these roughly corresponded to the way in which many view American history (i.e., the "20's", the "50's").

A subset of cartoons, judged to have specifically "July fourth" themes, were printed from the microfilm. Those containing minorities and women were coded for appearance, role, and dominance. The total number was 378: 354 contained women; 24, racial minorities. A single person did the coding, and spot checks by other coders revealed consistency. In cases where the original coder was undecided, a second and third coder made a final determination. In case of disagreement, the majority opinion of three independent coders was followed.

The unit of analysis for all coding was the cartoon. A sketch containing more than one minority person would be rated according to the dominant impressions given about minorities.

Findings

In general, cartoons excluded racial minorities. Over ninety percent contained Caucasians while less than six percent included blacks, Asians, or native Americans.

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Insert Table 1

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Across decaded, the percentage of Caucasians was high except for decreases in the 1890s and 1950s, when symbols like the American flag were frequently used in cartoons in place of human figures. The percentage of native Americans was low at all times. Inclusion of Asians and blacks was

generally low except for an increase when their issues were salient. Blacks were depicted in ten percent of the cartoons during the 1960s -- a time of heightened Civil Rights activity. Inclusion of Asians peaked during World War II and especially during the Korean War. Blacks also appeared more during the 1910 - 1919 decade; those portrayals referred to salient local issues (e.g., East St. Louis race riots) rather than to national concerns.

The pattern of including blacks and Asians makes a point bolstered by the pattern for women.[14] Once minorities' place in the American consciousness became less dramatic, they were not routinely included in cartoons. Although blacks made strides during the 1960s and Asians were notable during the wars, they appeared infrequently in subsequent decades. Women appeared less after achieving the vote than in the four preceding decades. During the 1960s, the number of women increased, corresponding to women's movement activity. But the increase did not continue into the 1970s, when such activity focused on implementing and achieving legislation.

In sum, minorities and women tended to appear more when their issues were salient; following those periods their portrayal dropped off again.

Turning to the way in which minorities and women were portrayed, we considered appearance, role, and dominance. The depiction of all subjects changed from near caricature in early decades to greater directness or simplicity in later ones. Specifically, from the 1890s through the 1930s, facial features of blacks, Asians, and native Americans were exaggerated in 67% of the cases, even to the point of ugliness in 45%. After 1940, racial minorities clearly had race-specific characteristics, but they were not overdrawn in at least 60% of the cases. Examples include a shift from depictions like a young black male with large minstrel-show white lips, jutting careman jaw, and a hat with a flower in it in 1902, to a firm-faced black man in a business suit with arms folded across his

chest in a determined manner in 1963.

For women, a matronly image predominated from the 1890s through the 1950s. Women's hair was severely treated, such as pulled back into a bun or covered, rather than adorned, with a hat. Women were overweight or had square figures, and their attire included a housedress, apron, or high-necked, long-sleeved dress intended to conceal the body. In a minority of cases between 1890 and the 1930s, glamorous images were used. Elaborate coiffures topped exaggerated figures and clothes, that were either romanticized and flowing, or revealing. But after 1960, women appeared simply attired. Their body parts were drawn in proportion, and their hairdos were neither elaborate nor severe.

In short, over time, we noted a shift in appearance for minorities and women from exaggerated facial features and clothing to proportionate features and simpler, less costumed attire. The exceptions to this generalization were native Americans, who appeared in feathers and skins up through the 1940s. After that, they were not included in cartoons; native American appearance was abandoned rather than de-costumed.

Role portrayal of all groups, except native Americans, also changed over time. For racial minorities, stereotypical roles declined from 53% before 1950 to 8% after. Between 1890 and the 1920s, blacks were mostly depicted in roles that were destructive, such as race riots, or trivial, such as eating watermelon or shooting craps. But in later years (1930s on), blacks were depicted in the political arena, as workers defending freedom or spokespersons asking for political rights.

Stereotypical roles declined for women as well. From the 1900s through the 1930s, most often women were portrayed taking care of children, staying at home, or assisting the man. But in the 1960s and 1970s, women were more often drawn as politically involved American citizens. Whereas

about two-thirds of the female images were considered stereotypical before 1940, less than one-third were so classified in the 1960's and 1970's.

Representational roles increased after the 1930's -- just a decade before the decrease in stereotypical roles. Before 1940, only 14% of racial minorities stood for a nation or an abstract quality; after 1940, 54% were used in that way. For example, Asians stood for the Philippine republic (WP, 1946)[15] and Philippine independence (CT, 1946). Women, especially in the 1960s and 1970s, represented liberty. And blacks in costume depicted African nations.

It is interesting to note several other things about role portrayal. No cartoons showed Asians assimilated as part of the American peoples. They always stood for or were leaders or members of foreign countries. Native Americans only appeared wielding tomahawks and hiding behind trees. Apparently, Asian-Americans and modern native Americans were not part of the subject repertoire for cartoonists. Also, over time, few persons were shown in roles challenging the establishment. Three cartoons showed women as challengers; and two portrayed blacks in that role.

Dominance was also examined in cartoon imagery. In general, blacks, native Americans, and Asians were not dominant. They were seldom portrayed as equal to Caucasians; and they were alone in only 10% of the cartoons. Yet, there was a decrease in the degree of minority subordination over time. In early years, blacks, Asians, and native Americans were most often shown considerably smaller in size than Caucasians (in 47% of the cartoons). They were not in the visual center of the picture (in 80%), and they were part of a crowd (in 53%). By the 1960s and 1970s, however, they were in the visual center more often. Still, even in later cartoons, racial minorities mostly appeared in groups of 4 or more, and they never verbalized the cartoon message.

The portrayal of dominance for women shifted from being largely subordinate in the 1890's to 1930's to heavily ambiguous, that is equal in one respect while subordinate in another. Such cartoons were in the majority during the 1960's and 1970's. In early years, women were often peripherally present to the main action of the cartoon. They listened to political speeches as part of an audience; anxiously watched their spouses and sons set off fireworks; or sat beside or behind their husbands who drove a horse and buggy or automobile. When women represented an abstract quality, like liberty, they were usually subordinate to a male. For example, "Columbia" sat quietly at the end of the dinner table, while Uncle Sam lit a birthday cake (CD, 1909). A petite, glamorous "Liberty" assumed a posture implying deference to a tall Uncle Sam, who was busily engaged in watching fireworks in the front and center of the cartoon frame (WP, 1895).

In more recent cartoons, women were more frequently involved in the major action. They were roughly equal in size and visual placement to males. But quite often the male still seemed more important. For example, although an entire modern family stood before the Declaration of Independence, the man stood slightly in front of his wife and was depicted signing the document -- perhaps for his wife and children too (CD, 1972). Despite much attention focused on a black woman departing from a podium after giving a speech, the ironic encomium of the cartoon was uttered by Uncle Sam (AC, 1972).

In sum, for racial minorities, there was a decrease in the degree of subordination to Caucasians over time. For women, the kind of subordination shifted from obvious to subtle. However, neither racial minorities nor women achieved real dominance at any point. There was a small consistent minority of women portrayed alone (7%) or equal (14%) or dominant (7%). And in recent years (1950s on), there were some racial minorities shown alone (18%), equal (18%), or dominant (9%).

Discussion

During the 106 years studied here, the assimilation of minority groups into the repertoire of Fourth of July political cartoon imagery was small. When frequency of inclusion was considered, we saw that there were periods when inclusion increased, and that those periods coincided with periods when minorities' issues were salient. However, there were also periods of issue salience when minorities did not appear. The Native American activities of the late 1960's and early 1970's were not tied in with any increase in the portrayal of native Americans. Women did not appear more during the 1970s. And the South to North migration of blacks between 1940 and 1960 showed no added inclusion of black images. Also, after periods of salience, inclusion of minorities dropped again, yielding an overall frequency of only 6% of cartoons containing racial minorities and 25% containing women.

When the <u>way</u> in which minorities were portrayed was examined, a more mixed picture of assimilation was evident. Considering different aspects of the images, we found varied degrees of incorporation. Over time, the shift in appearance from exaggeration, even ugliness, to greater simplicity suggested that minorities were less foreign, less different, and more realistic than previously. (See Figure 1.)[16] Also, roles of racial minorities and women became more varied and less stereotypical and seemingly trivial. And the increase of representational roles indicated that various kinds of people could be used to stand for abstract qualities or ideas. So, on the one hand, there was evidence that minorities gradually became incorporated into political cartoon imagery in normal and diversified ways. On the other hand, the increase of representational roles -- in the absence of increased realistic roles -- suggested that minorities and women were kept at a dis-

tance, when incorporated into the imagery pool. Further evidence of this was the continued, though decreased, subordination of racial minorities to Caucasians and women to men. Although images of racial minorities increased in size and were placed more centrally, they always appeared in groups and never uttered the words of the cartoon. Although women became more central to the action and were roughly equal in size, they still were placed off center and visual and verbal attention was directed to the males. (See Figure 2)[17]

When the portrayal of different minority groups was examined, the mixed picture of assimilation was also evident. If we start with the least assimilated group, we found that native Americans constituted that category. They always appeared in feathers and skins, tiny in size, peripheral to the action, and they were not included after the 1940s. In contrast, Asians gradually increased in size, moved into the visual center, appeared more realistic and less exaggerated, and were included in representational roles. They appeared more frequently over time and their absolute frequency slightly surpassed that of blacks. However, like native Americans, Asians were always considered "foreign". They never appeared as Asian Americans, but always as representatives or members of an Eastern nation. Asians could be considered more assimilated into the Fourth of July imagery than native Americans, but less than blacks or women. (See Figure 3)[18]

With blacks and women, assessment of which group was more assimilated would be practically impossible. It would depend on weighting various indicators of incorporation; yet, as treated here, such weighting does not make intuitive sense. However, several comments can be made. Inclusion of blacks has increased over time while that of women has generally decreased. From the perspective of frequency over time, women have appeared

less in cartoons relative to their earlier position, and blacks have appeared more. Also, regarding dominance, blacks became less subordinate over time; women's subordination became subtle. Blacks could be said to have outdistanced women in that aspect also. But in size, visual placement, appearance, and role diversity, blacks and women made approximately equal gains across decades. And in terms of average frequency women's (25) inclusion far outweighs that of blacks (2.6%).

In sum, while incorporation of racial minorities and women into Fourth of July political cartoon imagery has remained small, there have been some areas in which portrayal of these groups has improved; namely, increases in realistic appearance, role diversity, and visual dominance. And for blacks and women, the increases in those areas have been notably better than for native Americans and Asians.

TABLE 1: RACIAL MINORITY AND GENDER IMAGES BY DECADE

(Percentage of Cartoons Using Images During Each Decade)

(N = 577)

	1890 1899	1900 1909	1910 1919	1920 1929	1930 1939	1940 1949	1950 1959	1960 1969	1970 1976	Average (n)
	(%)									
Percent Blacks	0.0	3.7	6.6	0.0	2.7	0.0	0.0	10.0	2.2	2.6 (15)
Percent Asians	0.0	1.9	3.3	1.2	0.0	4.4	6.8	3.3	2.2	2.8 (16)
Percent Native Americans	0.0	1.9	0.0	1.2	0.0	1.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	.5 (3)
Percent Caucasians	86.1	92.6	90.2	96.4	90.4	91.1	83.6	90.0	93.5	90.6 (523)
Percent Caucasian Females	31	41	44	40	14	13	7	25	15	25 (144)
Percent Caucasian Males	83	91	89	92	92	92	85	90	96	90 (517)

FOOTNOTES

[1]James D. Cully and Rex Bennett. "Selling Women, Selling Blacks," Journal of Communication 26:160-174 (1976).

[2]Charlote G. O'Kelly and Linda Edwards Blomquist. "Women and Blacks on TV," Journal of Communication 26: 179-184 (1976).

[3]Emory S. Bogardus. "Sociology of the Cartoon," Sociology and Social Research XXX: 139-147 (1945).

[4]O'Kelly and Blomquist, op.cit.

[5]Joseph P. Dominick and Bradley Greenberg. "Three Seasons of Blacks on Television," Journal of Advertising Research. April: 21-27 (1970).

[6]Bradley Greenberg and Sherrie Mazingo. "Racial Issues in Mass Media Institutions," Communication Among the Urban Poor (Project CUP) Report 16 Department of Communication. Michigan State University: 27-33.

[7]O'Kelly and Blomquist, op.cit.

[8]Audrey Shuey, Nancy King, and Barbara Griffith, "Stereotyping of Negroes and Whites: An Analysis of Magazine Pictures," Public Opinion Quarterly. Summer: 281-287 (1953).

[9]Keith Cox. "Changes in Stereotyping of Negroes and Whites in Magazine Advertisements," Public Opinion Quarterly. Winter: 603-609 (1969-1970).

[10]David Colfax and Susan Steinberg. "The Perpetuation of Racial Stereotypes: Blacks in Mass Circulation Magazine Advertisements." Public Opinion Quarterly. Spring: 8-18 (1972).

[11]O'Kelly and Blomquist, op. cit.

[12]O'Kelly and Blomquist, op. cit.

[13]William Boyenton, "The Negro Turns to Advertising." Journalism Quarterly. Spring: 227-235 (1965). Richard Lemon, "Black is the Color of TV's Newest Stars." Saturday Evening Post. November: 42-44 (1968). Dominick and Greenberg, op. cit. Harold Kassarjian. "The Negro and American Advertising, 1946-1965." Journal of Marketing Research. February: 29-39, (1969).

[14]"Women" refers to Caucasian females. However, there are so few minority females that the percentages remain the same whether minority women are included with Caucasian women or not.

[15]Throughout, WP stands for Washington Post followed by the year; NYT, New York Times; CT, Chicago Tribune; AC, Atlanta Constitution; CD, Columbus Dispatch.

[16]Atlanta Constitution, 1902. In the final frame of the cartoon strip shown in Figure 1 appears a black, typical of early portrayals of minorities. His eating watermelon is a stereotypical role, and his facial features and outfit approach a "costume-look."

[17] Atlanta Constitution, 1972. Figure 2 depicts blacks and females in a manner characteristic of recent cartoons. Uncle Sam retains the central position and speaks the words of the cartoon. But women and blacks are in the political arena and central to the main action of the cartoon.

[18] Washington Post, 1946. Figure 3 exemplifies an Asian in a representational role during the middle years of this study. His appearance is less exaggerated than was typical of early cartoons. Yet he is quite small; Asians "grew" in size in later cartoons.

Figure 1

"—And I Hope You Do Better Than I'm Doing"

Figure 2

'. . . Oh, Yes Mam, Big Enough for Everybody to Have His Say!'

Figure 3